

# The New York Times

## Arts & Leisure

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2016

**POP**

### TELLING STORIES IN SCRAPPY SONGS

NATE CHINEN

▶ Cary Ann Hearst and Michael Trent, the married couple who make up Shovels & Rope, share a belief in the power of raw emotion. Their scrappy new album, “Little Seeds” (New West), draws loosely from folk rock, cowpunk and Southern gothic traditions, with stories to spare. “Mourning Song” is an intimate reflection on the toll of Alzheimer’s. “BWYR” proposes a shaky but honest unity in the face of mass violence. But Mr. Trent, typically heard strumming a guitar, and Ms. Hearst, chiefly the band’s drummer, can deliver as much punch with a lighter premise, singing in their rafters-raising harmony. “I Know” suggests a sneering put-down of a rival band’s pretensions, while “San Andreas Fault Line Blues” belongs to the ageless category of Los Angeles disillusionment narratives. (Music Hall of Williamsburg, Monday, Oct. 17; Bowery Ballroom, Oct. 18-19.)